

April 25, 1983

LB 626

the word "substandard" is a word that is more likely to be used or that the city council is likely to adopt. So on that basis, I am going to vote against the Beutler amendment, although as Senator DeCamp said, that is a policy decision that frankly does not critically kill the bill.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Chambers, then Senator Vickers. Senator Vickers, why don't you go ahead and then we will catch Senator Chambers when he comes back.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President and members, I am going to support the amendment and I come from a rural area, too, I should remind everybody but it seems to me that if blighted can be applied to the Omaha, Lincoln area, the urban areas, there are many areas in this state in the rural areas where the term "blighted" could apply just as well. The term "substandard", as I mentioned the other day on this floor, I think is so vague that it is almost unworkable anyhow. What exactly does substandard mean? I assume that it means anything less than average. Now if we want to apply it that broad, if it is the policy of this Legislature to say that any place in this state that is below average would qualify for this type of assistance or this type of program, then I guess that is the policy that this Legislature needs to make. But if the policy of this Legislature is that it should apply only to those places that are really hurting or in really bad shape, blighted, if you want, then I think we should eliminate the word "substandard". Now I suggest to you that many of the small towns in rural Nebraska that by anybody's definition of blighted that this could be applied to. My own hometown could certainly qualify. If you say substandard and you apply the standard of the villages the size of Farnam against all the other villages out there that size, maybe it wouldn't apply because they are all about in that same shape. Now whether they are all below average or not, I don't know. If you apply the substandard against perhaps Farnam with a town the size of McCook, then obviously Farnam would be substandard. But if you look at the downtown area itself and you say there is a lot of empty stores here, there is a lot of businesses that have moved out, obviously it is a blighted area. I do not understand how removing the word "substandard" is going to work to a detriment of rural Nebraska any more than it does to the urban areas of this state because I don't think you can use that terminology anyhow. I don't understand how you can make it that broad. I don't understand how this Legislature can follow that philosophy. I think what we are talking about is whether we want to apply this to a relatively narrow areas to assist those areas or